

Wellness During Chronic Stress

A learning opportunity for centering around wellness for Peer
Counseling Coordinators

January 25, 2021

Presented by Monica Goedken, MPA

Violence Prevention Coordinator

Iowa Department of Public Health

Office of Disability, Injury & Violence Prevention

Learning Objectives

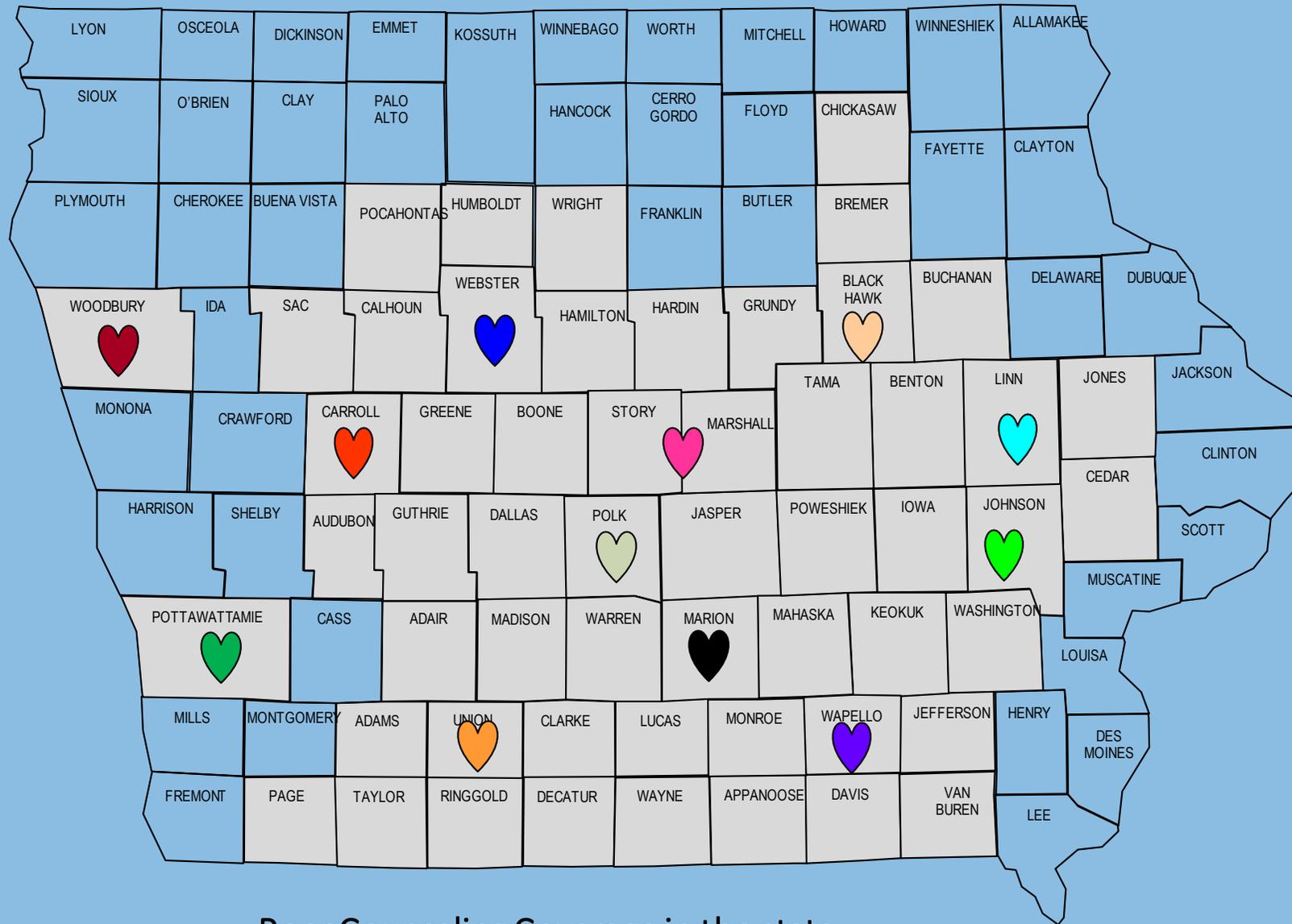
Peer Counselor will be able to;

- Define compassion fatigue
- Define a mother's mental load
- Explain the impact of chronic stress on energy, performance, and wellness
- Identify strategies to increase wellness and connection

Shared Humanity



**Image from Susan Samueli Integrative Health Institute

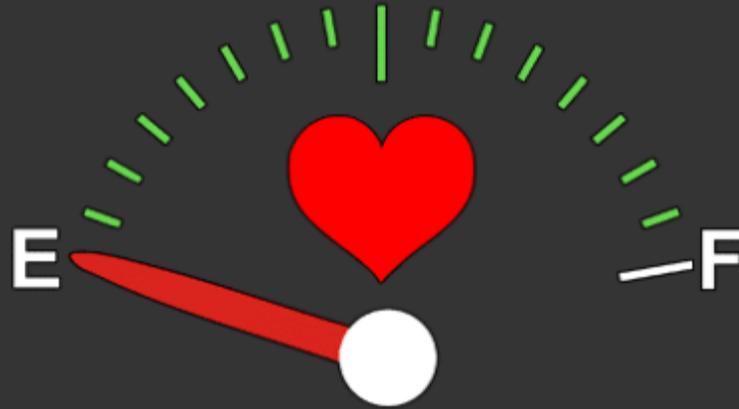


Peer Counseling Coverage in the state:

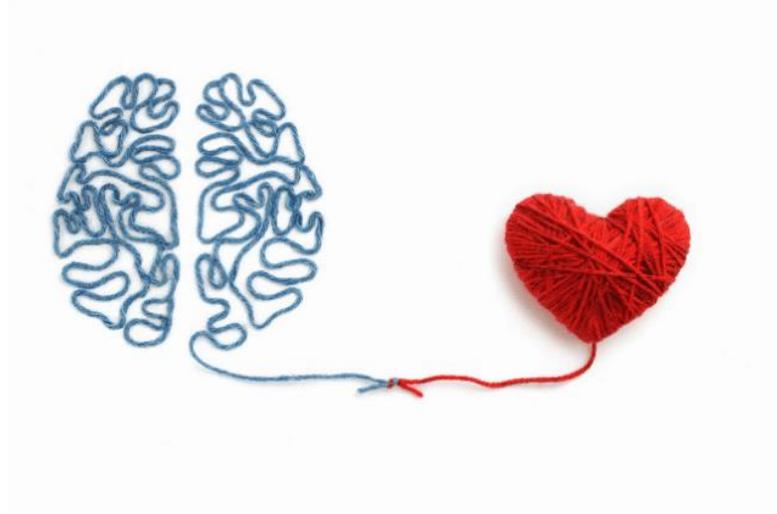
55 out of 99 Counties (30)

12 out of 20 WIC Agencies (7/20)

COMPASSION FATIGUE?



COMPASSION FATIGUE



Symptoms of compassion fatigue

WORK RELATED

Avoidance or dread of working with certain patients
Reduced inability to feel empathy towards patients or families
Frequent use of sick days
Lack of joyfulness

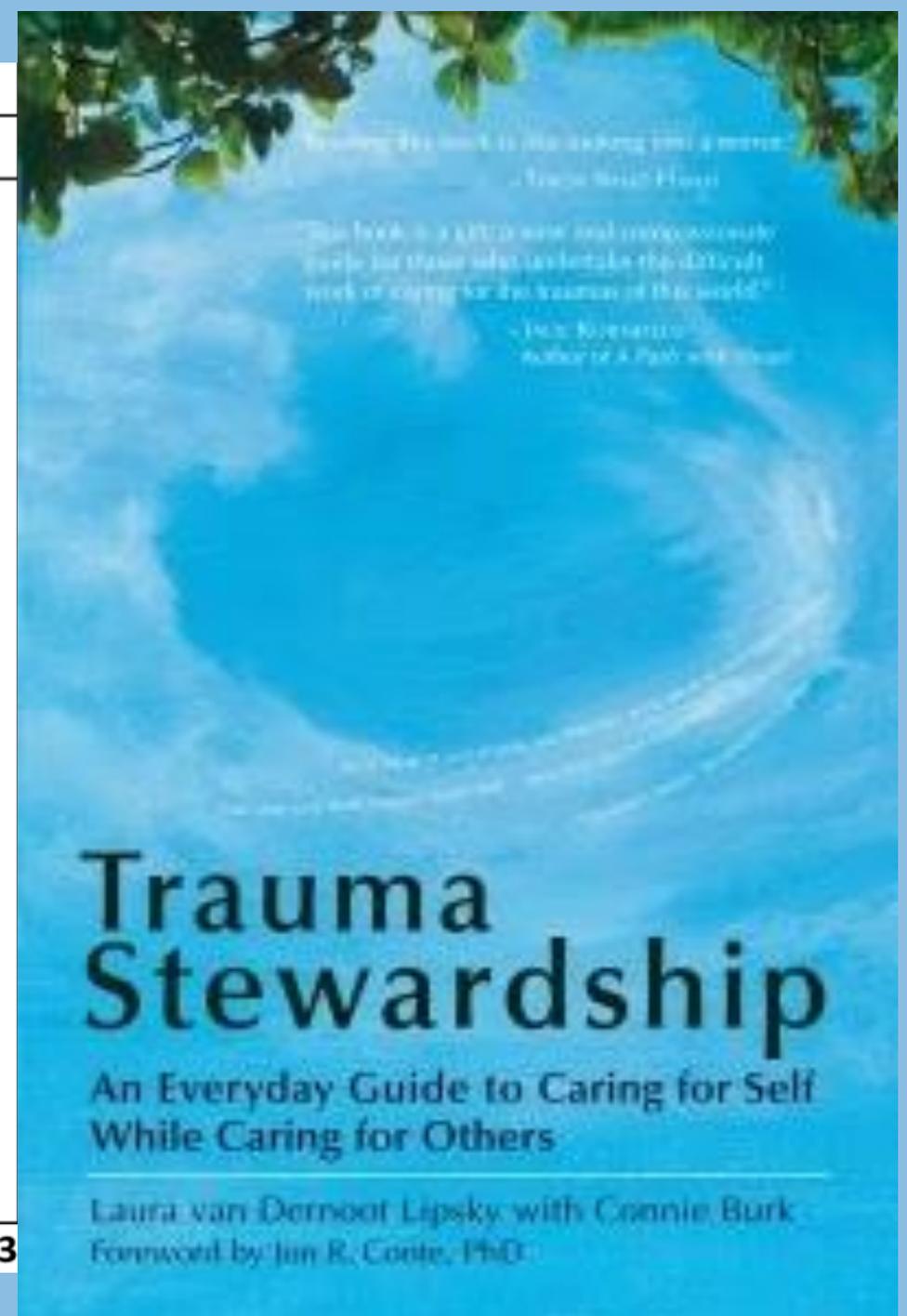
PHYSICAL

Headaches
Digestive problems: diarrhoea, constipation, upset stomach
Muscle tension
Sleep disturbances: inability to sleep, insomnia, too much sleep
Fatigue
Cardiac symptoms: chest pain/pressure, palpitations, tachycardia

EMOTIONAL

Mood swings
Restlessness
Irritability
Oversensitivity
Anxiety
Excessive use of substances: nicotine, alcohol, illicit drugs
Depression
Anger and resentment
Loss of objectivity
Memory issues
Poor concentration, focus and judgment

Lombardo & Eyre, 2011, p.3



Impact of Chronic Stress

Physical Signs

Aches and pains
Diarrhea or constipation
Nausea
Dizziness
Chest pain
Rapid heart rate
Frequent illness

Emotional Sign

Depression or anxiety
Anger
Irritability
Restlessness
Overwhelmed
Unmotivated
Unfocused
Trouble sleeping
Racing thoughts
Problems with memory
Problems with concentration

Mother's Mental Load

- Mental labor is different than housework, childcare, and emotion work.
- Mental labor is thinking activity performed for the sake of accomplishing family goals
- Family-related mental labor
- Disproportionately performed by mothers compared to fathers

Family Mental Load

1. Planning and strategizing
2. Monitoring and anticipating needs
3. Meta-parenting (parents thinking about their parenting)
4. Knowing (learning and remembering)
5. Managerial thinking (including delegating and instructing)
6. Self-regulation (ability to monitor and manage your energy, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors)

Neuroplasticity

- Our ability to heal connections between neurons in our brain
- The brain continually adjusts and reorganizes throughout our lives
- We have the ability to increase neural pathways aligned with wellness habits

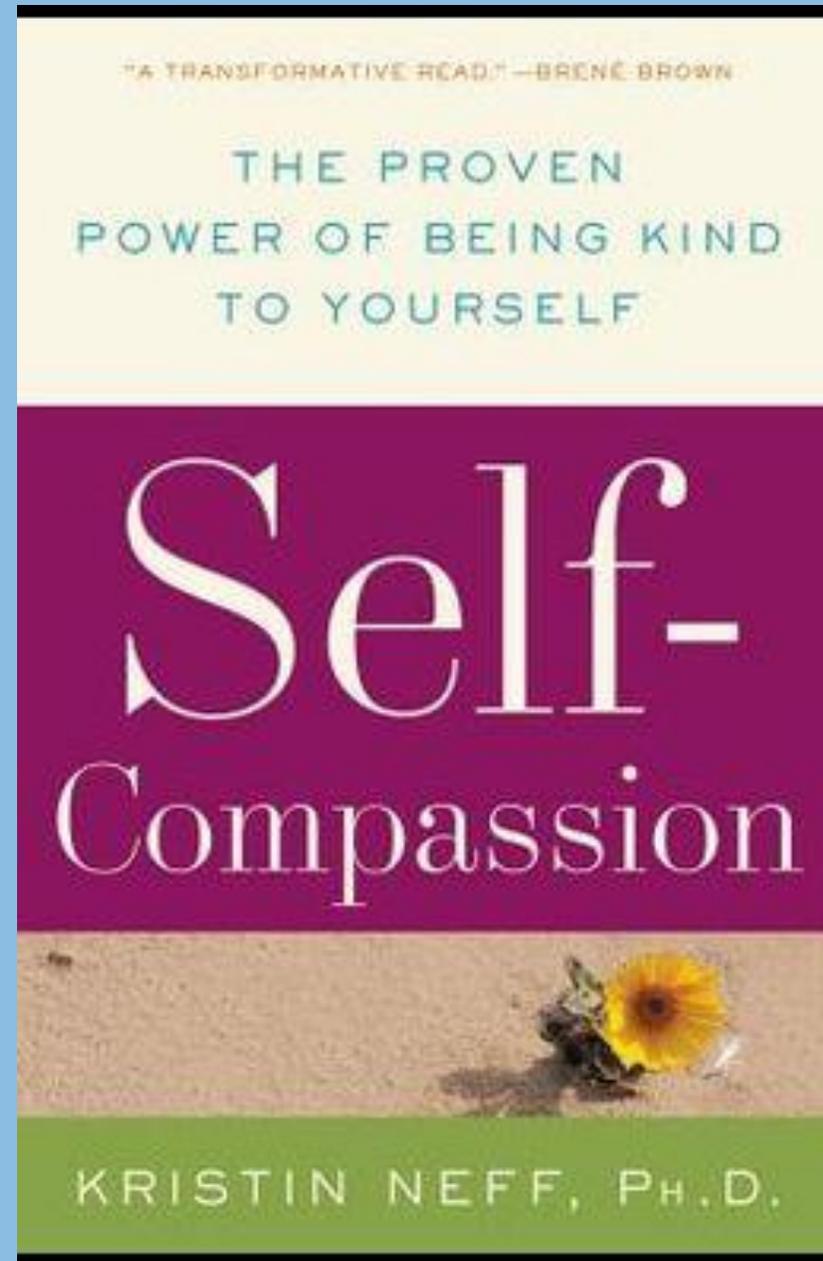
The brain continually reorganizes itself by forming **new neural connections** throughout life.

This phenomenon is known as **neuroplasticity**.



Self-Compassion

1. Self-kindness
2. Common humanity
3. Mindfulness



Self-Compassion and Mindfulness

Exercise: How Would You Treat a Friend?

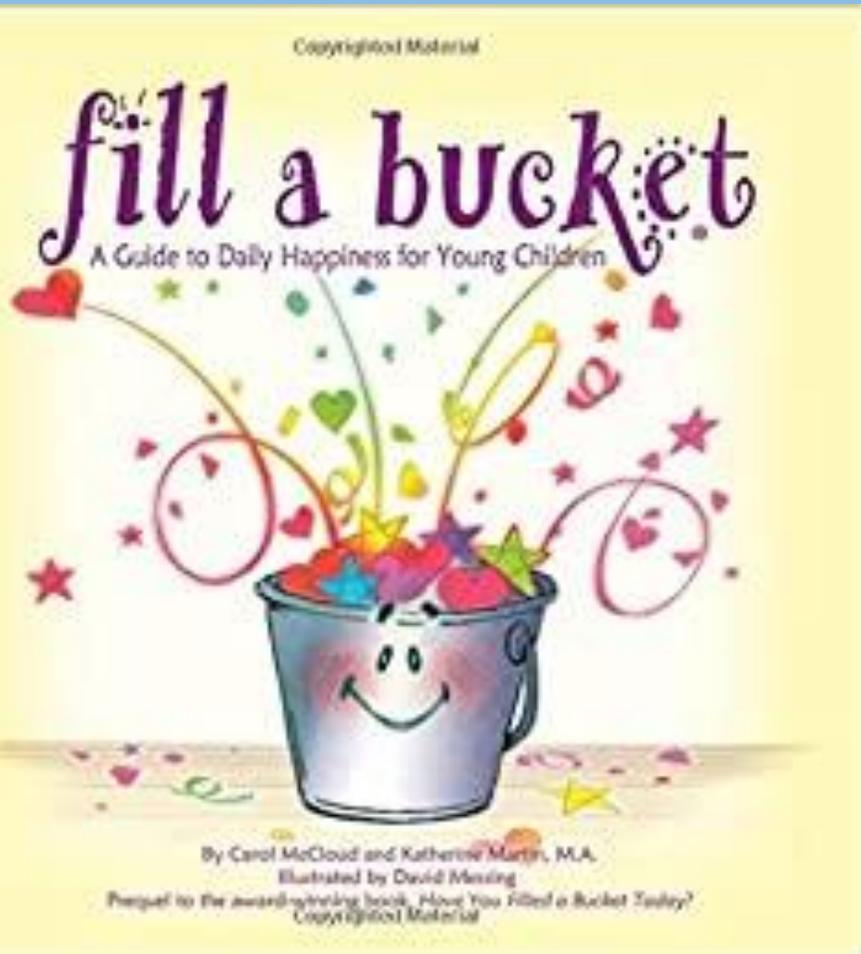
1. How do you respond to a friend when they are struggling? What do you say? What do you do? What is your tone?
2. How do you treat yourself when you are struggling? What do you say? What do you do? What is your tone? Home Practice 1. Notice how you speak to yourself throughout the day. What language do you use? 2. Practice “Soothing Touch” twice daily.
3. Use the “Self-Compassion Break” when you become aware of distress.

Healing Gestures

1. Celebrate
2. Comfort
3. Listen
4. Collaborate
5. Inspire



Wellness Strategies



- What were the things you enjoyed doing before you became a parent?
- Before work was all consuming?
- How do you return to yourself at the end of your workday?
- What motivates you?
- What are your values?



Resources

HOPES Huntington's Disease Outreach Project (Neuroplasticity)

Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others

Compassion Fatigue/Satisfaction Self-Test (CFS)

Robertson, L.G., Anderson, T.L., Hall, E.L., Kim, C.L. Mothers and Mental Labor: A Phenomenological Focus Group Study of Family-Related Thinking Work. *Psychology of Women Quarterly* Volume 43 issue 2 (2019).

Upton, K.V. An investigation into compassion fatigue and self-compassion in acute medical care hospital nurses: a mixed methods study. *J of Compassionate Health Care* 5, 7 (2018).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40639-018-0050-x>

Childhood Trauma: Changing Minds FUTURES without Violence Healing Gestures.

Self-Compassion and Mindfulness. The Centre for Mindfulness Studies

Monica Goedken, MPA

Violence Prevention Coordinator

Rape Prevention Education Director

Iowa Department of Public Health

Office of Disability, Injury & Violence Prevention

Monica.Goedken@idph.iowa.gov